

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 -- 13. (canceled)

1 14. (new) An apparatus for aligning a stack of flexible
2 sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the sheets
3 projecting laterally past one of the edges, the apparatus
4 comprising:

5 a stabilizing element shiftable horizontally toward and
6 away from the one edge of the substrate and having a face directed
7 toward the sheets;

8 a slip-preventing layer on the face; and
9 means for shifting the element horizontally toward the
10 stack and substrate for engaging the projecting sheets and pushing
11 same inward on the substrate to a position lying on or inward of
12 the outer edge without vertically bending or deflecting the sheets.

1 15. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 14 wherein the
2 layer is resilient.

1 16. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 15 wherein the
2 layer is made of an elastomer.

1 17. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 15 wherein the
2 element has an upper part and a lower part.

1 18. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 17 wherein the
2 upper and lower part are joined together at a nonplanar interface.

1 19. (new) An apparatus for aligning a stack of flexible
2 sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the sheets
3 projecting laterally past one of the edges, the apparatus
4 comprising:

5 a stabilizing element shiftable horizontally toward and
6 away from the one edge of the substrate;
7 a member on the element engageable under the stack; and
8 means for shifting the element horizontally toward the
9 stack and fitting the member under the projecting sheets to support
10 same while and pushing the projecting sheets inward on the
11 substrate to a position lying on or inward of the outer edge
12 without vertically bending or deflecting the sheets.

1 20. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 19 wherein the
2 element has a horizontal surface portion generally level with an
3 upper surface of the substrate.

4 21. (new) A method of aligning a stack of flexible
5 sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the sheets

6 projecting laterally past one of the edges, the method comprising
7 the step of:

8 pressing a nonslip surface of a stabilizing element
9 against the laterally projecting sheets so as to push the laterally
10 projecting sheets in at least to the outer edge without bending
11 while pushing them in; and thereafter

12 pressing the stabilizing element against the other sheets
13 in the stack to align them on the substrate.

1 22. (new) The method defined in claim 21, further
2 comprising the step before pressing the stabilizing element against
3 the laterally projecting sheets of:

4 aligning the substrate relative to the stabilizing
5 element.

1 23. (new) The method defined in claim 21, further
2 comprising the step of
3 reducing friction between a lowermost sheet of the stack
4 and a support surface of the substrate on which it rests.

1 24. (new) The method defined in claim 23 wherein
2 friction is reduced by providing a low-friction foil between the
3 lowermost sheet and the upper surface.

1 25. (new) The method defined in claim 23 wherein
2 friction is reduced by coating the upper surface with a lubricant.

1 26. (new) A method of aligning a stack of flexible
2 sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the sheets
3 projecting laterally past one of the edges, the method comprising
4 the step of:

5 engaging a support surface of a stabilizing element
6 underneath the laterally projecting sheets and pushing the
7 stabilizing and the laterally projecting sheets in at least to the
8 outer edge without bending the laterally projecting sheets; and
9 thereafter

10 pressing the stabilizing element against the other sheets
11 in the stack to align them on the substrate.